Malpractice in BPO agencies

361. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a few instances of selling information by some employees of Business Prospects Outsourcing agencies in India to other agencies; and

(b) if so, what action has been proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes Sir. A report was appeared on June 23, 2005 in The Sun (UK), resulting from an investigation by their reporter, about the sale of customer data by an employee of a call centre near Delhi. In April, 2005 it was alleged that three former employees of a Pune-based company did some illegal transaction of funds of customers.

(b) Government and NASSCOM view that a case of theft of information or a breach of a customer's confidentiality must be treated seriously.

Section 66 of the IT Act, 2000 provides for stringent penalties for infringement of such incidents including breaching of confidentiality, privacy and hacking of a computer system.

A high level meeting involving Government officials, NASSCOM etc., was held to discuss this issue. It was opined that the problem is not unique to a single nation. Such problems had occurred across the world and this is one off such case. Indian BPO industry undertaking work for UK companies already comply with all the requirements of the Data Protection Act, as well as other security and confidentiality safeguards. The following suggestions have emerged to restore the Global confidence in Indian BPO industry:

* Introduction of amendments to the IT Act, 2000 that will provide stringent measure against the criminals.

* Providing training and supporting Indian law enforcement agencies to ensure that they are well equipped to tackle cyber crimes.

* Establishment of a register of IT professionals to ensure that only suitable staff are employed in the industry.